

PZ

10

.3

M56

Je

FT MEADE
GenColl

NY'S BIRD HOUSE



LILLIE · FULLER · MERRIAM



Class PZ 10

Book 3

Copyright N^o M 56
J₂

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT



“She had always been very fond of sitting at that window and looking out at the bird-house.”

Jenny's Bird-House

BY

Lillie Fuller Merriam

Illustrated by C. L. Butler



BOSTON, MASS.
C. M. CLARK PUBLISHING CO.
1910

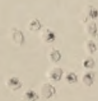
PZ 10

.3

M 56

Je

Copyright, 1910
THE C. M. CLARK PUBLISHING CO.
Boston, Massachusetts
U. S. A.



R

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JENNY MEETS THE SPARROW FAMILY . . .	I
II. THE BIRDS' GRAND BALL	19
III. THE MOLASSES CANDY BOY	33
IV. THE CANARY MUSICALE	43
V. THE LITTLE BIRDS' COMING OUT PARTY . . .	61
VI. THE SPARROW FAMILY GOES SOUTH FOR THE WINTER	75
VII. JENNY'S FLY-AWAY CANARY	82

ILLUSTRATIONS

“She had always been very fond of sitting at that window
and looking out at the bird-house.” . Frontispiece ✓

PAGE

“Just then a bright-eyed, fine-looking young Mr. Mock-
ing Bird spied her.” 17 ✓

The Bird-House 31 ✓

“As she alighted on the sill she had discovered the mo-
lasses candy boy” 41 ✓

“She came to the window in her white nightie just in time
to see the whole flock rise into the air and fly away
due South” 59 ✓

“He looked back over his shoulder and said ‘Quack,’
‘Quack’ again” 74 ✓

DEDICATION

*To the memory of
him who was the inspiration
of her efforts toward development
of the highest and best
in her nature through childhood,
girlhood and womanhood,
her beloved uncle*

David Boardman Flint

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book has been written by the real Jenny's mother for the children who love birds and are fond of "making-believe."



JENNY'S BIRD-HOUSE

JENNY MEETS THE SPARROW FAMILY

THERE was once a little girl named Jenny. She was a dear little girl, very sweet and gentle and loving. She had been quite ill with a fever but was slowly getting well. She and her mother had had many happy times together in spite of the illness, for her mother had been her nurse. Naps were necessary things her "Mama nurse" had told her; so, about two o'clock one afternoon, she had been tucked into her little white bed. The shades had been drawn

down and the screen put carefully about the fire so that no spark should take it into its head to pop out on the rug. Her mother had kissed her, as she always did when she was going out of the room for a long time, and Jenny had been left to take a nap.

After her mother had gone, the little girl closed her eyes and tried to sleep but, dear me, thoughts about everything would come and keep her eyes wide open. She thought of her different playmates, of the little girl friend next door, her pet dog, her pretty Angora kitten that she had not seen since she had been ill.

Suddenly she remembered the little white bird-house on a pole in the next yard and the more she thought of it, the more she wished she might see just how it looked inside. It could be seen from one of the nursery windows — which was the room she was in now — and she had always

been very fond of sitting at that window and looking out at the bird-house. It was a very stately bird-house with a tower and an arched doorway in the tower which was large and square and three stories high, while the other part of the house was but two stories high and had two rows of long windows. There were five birds in the bird family that was living in it this year—a father bird and a mother bird and three tiny birds.

Jenny had watched them a good deal the past few days and felt as if she knew them quite well. How she wished she were small enough to go into the bird-house just as the birds did and as though it were a truly house. It would be such fun to go and call upon the mama bird and see the little baby birds. She kept thinking and thinking about it and wishing and wishing. She closed her eyes

and tried to imagine how it probably looked inside the little white house on the pole.

Oh my, she felt herself lifted high up above the trees — she seemed to be flying — and then she seemed to stop suddenly — she opened her eyes and found herself standing in front of the arched door of the tower of the bird-house, high above the ground, on top of the tall pole and, quite to her surprise, there seemed to be plenty of room for her.

“I do believe I’m no bigger than a Jenny Wren,” said she.

As she looked about her, she saw a little door-plate by the side of the door and on it was printed “Benjamin Sparrow” so she knew it was the Benjamin Sparrow family who lived there. She peeped in at the door which stood wide open as if it invited people to walk in, and Jenny did so very quickly.

She found herself in a big hall which ran through to the other side of the tower. On one side of the hall there seemed to be a tiny reception room and beyond that a room in which she caught a glimpse of a grand piano and a number of tiny violins. The walls seemed to be covered with rows of jews' harps. "That," thought little Jenny, "must be the music-room."

A grand staircase led to the next floor. Jenny hopped along to the foot of it and looked up and turning her bright little head peeped at first one side and then the other just as she had seen little birds do. She thought to herself, "I'd just love to go up those stairs and see what is up there."

Just then she heard from up above her what seemed like a bird chirping because she was not used, yet, to bird language. At last, to her sur-

prise, she understood that Mrs. Benjamin Sparrow was calling down to her, "Won't you come right up, Jenny Wren?"

You may imagine her delight. This was just what she wanted and so up she went. But she did not run up, —she hopped up with both feet at a time from one stair to another. She thought it was queer to do this at first, but by the time she had reached the top step, she did it as naturally as any other little bird.

There stood little Mrs. Sparrow with the tip of her pretty brown wing held out to greet Jenny. Jenny touched it with the tip of her brown wing and saw that she had shaken hands in the way best liked by birds. Mrs. Sparrow wore a tiny little lace apron over her brown dress, for, as she explained to her visitor, "It's the nurse's afternoon out and I am taking care of the children. I have

three and all are of the same age. Come and see them."

The nursery was a pretty room at the head of the stairs and opened into Mrs. Sparrow's own room. There were three little cribs in it, and in each was a tiny sparrow.

"This one is little Ben Sparrow," said their fond mother, leading Jenny from crib to crib, "this is little Tom Sparrow and this one is little Miss Susan Sparrow. They look just like their father, every one of them." Mrs. Sparrow looked proudly at each little bird and Jenny saw that she was expected to admire them, which she tried to do but found it pretty hard for they had very few feathers and their mouths were, by far, the largest part of them. They were hungry all the time and kept calling mama-bird, who had to be constantly giving them bits of chopped worms and now and then a fly from a dish

on the centre-table. Jenny Wren thought she had never seen such restless children, but, probably, they were only very much like some little boys and girls whom we know, when Mother has a caller.

There were all sorts of pretty and amusing things for bird children in the nursery. Each little bird had a tiny ring that was hung from the ceiling—these were their swings. Each had his own little cup, and rods were fastened across two corners of the room so that they could perch upon them. In another corner there was a little seat made to represent a bird's nest, and there Jenny and Mrs. Sparrow sat to have a talk. Jenny was quite sure she was hearing more bird-gossip than she had ever heard before in all her life.

“Now what do you think?” said Mrs. Sparrow. “Mr. Robin, one of our neighbors, went away for a

whole day, leaving his wife and children nothing to eat from four in the morning till five at night. Their cries of hunger disturbed the whole neighborhood; but, of course, no one could do anything for them because there are no other Robins in the settlement and, naturally, Sparrows and other kinds of birds wouldn't know what Robins would want to eat."

Jenny said, "Of course not."

"Do you know Mrs. E. Sparrow, Jenny Wren?" asked Mrs. Benjamin Sparrow. "I mean the one who has a summer residence in the eaves of Mr. Howe's barn."

Jenny replied that she had noticed Mrs. E. Sparrow flying about, but had never met her.

"She has one club-footed child," went on Mrs. Sparrow. "I should feel dreadfully if we had a club-footed child. Our children's feet are all perfect, just like their father's."

At this, each little bird Sparrow put his or her feet over the top of the crib so that Jenny could see how perfect they were.

“The Cedar-Bird children are such dear little things, Jenny! I saw them yesterday, Tommy and Betty Cedar, sitting on a branch of the apple tree in the next yard. First Tommy hopped over and kissed Betty—then hopped back. By and by Betty hopped over and kissed Tommy, then went back to where she was sitting. They kept doing that for at least five minutes. I love to see affection in families, don’t you? Father and Mother Cedar-Bird were so kind last year to the little Robin who lost both her parents. They adopted her and brought her up with their own children.”

“How very kind!” exclaimed Jenny, “I wonder if that little kitten had just lost her mother—I mean the

one who was crying so in the Palmer's garden yesterday afternoon. Every one in the neighborhood ran out to see what was the matter, and hunted everywhere, but they couldn't find the kitten."

Mrs. Sparrow burst out laughing. "I saw them," she said when she could get her breath, "and there wasn't any kitten at all. Mr. Cat-bird had been calling on us and he said when he went away, 'Now watch for some fun.' So he hid himself on this side of the fence and began to cry like a cat, and that was what made the people come out to look for it. I was peeping from the nursery window and holding onto my sides till my wings fairly ached.

"To change the subject — Have you met Mr. Bobolink, Jenny Wren?"

"I never have," said Jenny, "I don't know him when I see him."

"You can't mistake him when you

do, for he dresses so differently from other birds. He looks as if he wore his coat the wrong way round, for he has a black breast and a white back. Most of the gentlemen birds wear dark coats and white, or fancy, vests. Mr. Bobolink is a merry fellow, always singing, and so full of fun all the time. Mr. and Mrs. Bobolink know very well how to keep bird-hunters from finding their nest. They fly about and pretend it is in first one place and then another, if they are being watched, until the hunter is tired out and gives up trying to find the nest."

"How clever!" said Jenny.

"Very!" said Mrs. Sparrow.

All this bird talk seemed very natural to Jenny because she was getting used to being a little bird instead of a little girl. By and by she felt that she must go and hopped down to the floor. Just then the

nurse returned; so Mrs. Sparrow went out of the nursery with her visitor. To Jenny's delight, for she was so anxious to see the whole of the inside of the bird-house, the kind little hostess said, "You have never visited us before, Jenny, wouldn't you like to look about our new home?"

Jenny said she would be delighted to do so. They went first to the top floor of the tower which had a lovely view of Mr. Coolidge's house, the back of Dr. Palmer's barn and of the Martins' garbage pail, around which were gathered a number of very elegant-looking birds. Strange to say Jenny found she was very much interested in this pail to-day. She had always been rather distressed about it before. "It must be because I'm a little bird now," thought she.

After looking through the rooms Jenny and her hostess hopped gaily down the two flights of stairs to the

ground floor, chattering all the way, as birds are apt to do.

“This is our dining room,” said Mrs. Sparrow as she took Jenny through a wide door, leading from the hall into the other part of the house. It was all one room and was two stories high. “This makes a lovely ball-room,” chirped Mrs. Sparrow, “and that just reminds me that we have our grand ball next week and it would give Mr. Sparrow and me much pleasure if you would come, my dear.”

Jenny bowed and said she would certainly come, at the same time wondering if her sober brown dress would be gay enough for so great an occasion.

“How kind you are to ask me, Mrs. Sparrow,” she said gratefully; but Mrs. Sparrow said they would be honored if she came. Then they said good-bye to each other on the

doorstep, and Jenny turned to go.

“Oh dear me!” she said to herself, “how shall I ever get home? It’s very, very high up here.”

She went to the edge of the terrace—it was a square board—on which the bird-house stood, and looked over. It was a long way to the ground, but she must go for she knew her dear mother would be frightened to find her gone. So she shut her eyes tightly together, spread out her wings and jumped. She felt herself dropping slowly down, down, and she alighted as softly as one of her new feathers might have done. She opened her eyes and found herself in her own nursery.

There she was in her little white bed. She looked for Mrs. Sparrow, but instead she saw bottles with all sorts of medicines that her mother had been giving her while she had been ill. There were no little cribs

in her nursery, no ring-swings hung from the ceiling. She lay very still for a few minutes and was only fairly awakened when her mother bent lovingly over her and said, "Why, my dear little daughter, you have had a long, long nap — you must have been dreaming something very pleasant."

"Oh, I did have such a pretty dream, Mama dear," said the little girl, putting her arms around her mother's neck and nestling close; then while she had her supper which Mama-nurse brought her on a little china tray, with the dearest little china dishes all her very own, Jenny told her mother all about her dream-visit to the bird-house.



“Just then a bright-eyed, fine-looking young Mr. Mocking Bird spied her.”



CHAPTER II

THE BIRDS' GRAND BALL

ONE week later found little Jenny very, very much better, but still in need of her afternoon nap, so her mother had darkened the room after tucking her in, and had left her with a kiss.

The child lay in her pretty white bed thinking. At last she remembered her dream about the bird-house and said to herself, "Oh my, this is the day of the Birds' Grand Ball. How I wish I might go!" She tried to "make believe" just how it would look but soon grew too sleepy

and at last shut her eyes. When she opened them, to her surprise, she found herself again standing just outside the arched doorway of the little bird-house.

They had put up an awning of gaily striped cloth in front of the arched door, and birds of all kinds were coming from every direction through the air and dropping down upon the square terrace upon which the bird-house stood, until it was almost covered with them. Such straightening of wing and tail feathers, fluffing out of jabots and shirt fronts, Jenny had never seen before. Then each gallant Mr. Bird offered his right wing to his fair companion and they hopped along, keeping step perfectly, under the awning, up the steps and through the arched door, into the grand hall.

As birds never need to lay aside

any wraps, they could go at once to speak to their hostess.

At first little Jenny felt very shy and strange, for it was all new to her. She had never attended a Birds' Ball before, and, as she had no escort, she almost wished she had not come, although she knew she looked uncommonly well in her new, fresh brown dress, not a feather of which could be found fault with. She stood a moment at the door gathering courage to enter. Just then a bright-eyed, fine-looking young Mr. Mocking Bird spied her. He hopped gaily down the steps and offered her his wing with all the grace imaginable. Jenny was delighted. Now she need not mind that she had come alone. She thanked him and politely accepted his wing. More than one turned to look at them, as they hopped gracefully along, keeping time to the strains of music which floated down

from the top of the grand staircase where she spied Mr. Robin Redbreast and his band.

As Jenny passed the music-room she peeped in and saw that the violins and all the jews'-harps had disappeared, so she thought to herself, "It is quite evident that Mr. Robin and his musicians are using them."

As she looked about her, she saw birds, birds, birds of every possible description. Blue Jays, Blackbirds, Sparrows, Swallows, Kingbirds, Bobolinks, Meadow Larks, Whippoorwills, very many of the English Sparrows, and two Nightingales, who had come from the South expressly to be at this ball. There were a number of pretty Orioles with the most beautiful gowns she had ever seen. "They surely must have come all the way from California," thought Jenny. "I have never seen them in this neighborhood before."

The host and hostess stood at the end of the long hall, receiving their many guests; and as Jenny reached them with her handsome escort, Mr. Mocking Bird, she was honored by a sweet smile and an affectionate kiss from Mrs. Sparrow.

At a sign from the hostess, Mr. Blackbird whistled loudly. The birds understood what it meant for suddenly the gay throng stopped hopping about through the hall and lower rooms and gathered in the grand hall and on the staircase to listen to little Miss Canary, who was so very kind as to favor them, so the host announced, with one of her most beautiful songs. They were a very appreciative audience. Not even a chirp was heard during the song.

"Little birds," thought Jenny, "are very, very polite when people sing. 'I'll try to remember this.'"

Little Miss Canary was evidently

an opera singer, for she sang very high notes and her little body swayed about a great deal, until it almost seemed as though her tiny throat would burst with the marvelous arias she trilled.

After the song by Miss Canary, they were invited to the grand ball-room, and as they hopped along Jenny heard the sweet strains of a waltz. The room was soon filled with guests. The windows had been darkened and the room was beautifully lighted by a thousand tiny fireflies. Jenny thought she had never seen anything half so pretty. The dancing was a funny performance. Jenny thought it more unique than graceful, and, as she stood watching them, she laughed till her sides ached to see a fat Cock Robin puffing away as he and little Miss Humming Bird went waltzing around the room. Little Miss Humming Bird was so tiny

she looked as though the wind might blow her away. And then, there was another comical sight, too. It was Mr. Wren making every effort to pilot a huge Mrs. Bluebird through the dip waltz.

“Oh, that must be my cousin,” thought Jenny. “His name is the same as mine.”

He soon came over to where Jenny was sitting, fanning himself with his wing and fairly gasping. He very politely invited Jenny to take a spin with him, but having seen his experience with Mrs. Bluebird, Jenny thought she had better not try. So, thanking him very sweetly, she called his attention from the dance by asking him about his wife and family, and if he were her cousin.

The host soon announced that refreshments would be served on the terrace, and as Jenny peeped through the window she saw what she thought

looked very much like one of the little Martin girl's pocket handkerchiefs, of which the host had made a tent. She noticed that it had an "M" in the corner, anyway.

"That's queer," thought Jenny, "but I suppose they borrowed it."

The dancers went merrily about, helping themselves to freshly caught rain water and a variety of eatables, some of which Jenny was quite sure she had seen that very day in the Martins' garbage pail. Everything tasted so good, however, that she thought to herself that she would beg the cook for the scraps after this.

Then followed more dancing — Waltzes, Two-steps, Polkas, Virginia Reels, which the short-tailed birds could dance much more easily than the long-tailed birds. Jenny, at last, found a fine partner in Mr. Baltimore Oriole. It was all very gay,

but finally Jenny's feet began to feel tired and she was glad to see that it was nearing time to go.

Every one was bidding the host and hostess good-bye. Jenny had noticed that Mrs. Sparrow had been obliged to excuse herself a dozen times or more to satisfy the wants of the little Sparrows, in the nursery. Jenny had seen them when she made her call the week before. They were very troublesome little Sparrows to-day and refused to take anything to eat, except from their mother's bill.

The terrace was now full of guests getting ready to depart. Mr. Robin and his band were playing "When the Swallows Homeward Fly." Jenny had said good-bye to her escort, Mr. Mocking Bird, who had asked permission to call on her some day soon. She thanked him for his kind attention. They had touched the tips of their right wings, which is the way

little birds shake hands, and with a sudden good-bye song they had all flown away — all but Jenny.

For the first time that afternoon she realized that she had not been born a bird, because here she was again wondering how to reach the ground. She stood first on one foot, then on the other. She ran to the edge of the terrace, peeped over and when she saw how far above the ground she was, her little heart went pitty-pat. Just then she heard her host say in a deep masculine chirp, "Shall I assist you to descend?" Before she could reply, she found she had been politely pushed — yes, that is the only word for it — right over the edge.

Her surprise at this was followed by another — she found she could fly, so she kept on and on until she alighted in the apple tree in Dr. Baldwin's yard. There she rested in the old tree for awhile. Now she was

quite courageous, and decided she would try all by herself. She spread her wings and flew straight for the maple tree near her own home. Just then the most intense longing to see her mother came over her. She shut her eyes and made a bold dash for the open window of her own room, where she knew she would find her mother sitting with her sewing. When she was sure she was inside, she opened her eyes and found that she wasn't Jenny Wren any more, but just plain Jenny again, in her little white bed.

She lay very still, looking about her at the pretty room and everything in it. Then she saw the one she loved most of all—her dear mama, who sat by the window, quietly sewing. She called to her:

“Oh, Mama dear, I have had another most beautiful dream of the bird-house. Shall I tell you about it?”

“Of course I’d like to hear about it, Sweetheart,” she said.

“It was about a grand ball that Mrs. Sparrow invited me to come to last week but I never dreamed that I could go and then I dreamed that I did,” the little girl laughed.

“It was so pretty—ever so many birds were there that looked just like the pictures in my bird-book.”

Holding her mother’s hand closely in hers, her eyes as bright as stars with excitement, her cheeks flushed pink from her nap, Jenny told her mother everything she could remember about the Birds’ Grand Ball.





The Bird-House



CHAPTER III

THE MOLASSES CANDY BOY

ONE day while Jenny was still in her room after her illness, some one who loved her very much sent in to her a molasses candy boy. He was quite a good-sized boy, about five or six inches long. He had a funny, flat, round head and two flat, long arms and two flat, long legs which could be easily eaten, she thought. His mouth was made of a stoned raisin, his eyes and the tip of his nose were made of currants. His body was rather round and looked as though he had on a boy's jacket buttoned way up to his throat. You

may be sure Jenny was delighted to see this molasses candy boy.

She had been ill for some time and had not seen her little friends for weeks, and might not for some time to come, so the molasses candy boy seemed almost like an old friend. He looked so good that she touched the tip of his arms and feet with her tongue. My, but it was delicious! But no, it wouldn't do for her to eat him the very first day of his stay, so she only took little tastes of him now and again and he wasn't very much shorter when night came than when he arrived that morning. She would have liked to go to sleep with him under her pillow, but she knew that that would never do with a molasses candy child, so her mother put him on a little plate and set him outside the window, on the sill, almost closing the window — but not quite.

Now, it happened that the Sparrow family, who lived in the bird-house in the next yard, and with whom Jenny had grown quite well acquainted during her illness, always took an airing about five o'clock in the morning before Father bird went to business. Mr. Sparrow bought and sold grasshoppers and angleworms.

The baby Sparrows had now learned to fly quite well, so the whole family could go out together. The only thing Mama bird and Papa bird had to do was to chirp "Up," and away the children would fly, directly into a tree or onto a roof; or, they would say "Down" and with very little fussing indeed they would drop to the ground.

Mrs. Sparrow had been out on this particular morning for some little time before the others. She had thought she would make a visit to Jenny's room and as she alighted on

the sill she had discovered the molasses candy boy. She knew it must be very good and she said to herself as she picked out one of his currant eyes, "I will just delay my visit to Jenny and have a feast for myself and the little ones." So she hurried to the bird-house to tell them what she had found.

She soon came back to the window sill with all the little Sparrows, and their father soon joined them. He had been making a call at the Martins' garbage pail, which stood just behind the shrubbery and which was always his first stop from the bird-house. He had been sorry to leave it, but of course his wife must be obeyed at once. Oh my, weren't they all glad when they reached the window sill and saw the surprise that Mother Sparrow had for them. They fluttered and peeped, and away went the raisins and the currants in

a minute. The little boy's coat was soon full of bill pecks and tiny foot-prints, for, I regret to say, birds are not very fastidious, and think nothing of walking about in their breakfast plates.

Once they heard a little noise from the room where Jenny slept, and Father bird gave a sharp little chirp so that in an instant the whole Sparrow family was on the roof of the Palmer piazza across the yard. Presently Mrs. Sparrow flew back. She landed very lightly on the window sill, then looked cautiously about her. She stood on tiptoe and stretched her little neck until she could look into the room. She saw Jenny, who looked as though she might be asleep. With a very low, gentle chirp, she called her family back to the tempting breakfast, so generously provided for them by some one.

Ah, but she did not see with her

bright black eyes the pair of bright gray ones that were looking at her over the top of the sheet. The noise of the little family enjoying her beloved molasses candy boy, of which she had had only a tiny taste herself, had wakened Jenny. At first she was about to frighten them away, but she soon saw that it was spoiled for her use already, and perhaps it might give them more pleasure, so she decided to let them enjoy it in order to have the fun of seeing them. She "made believe" that she was asleep, for every few minutes little Mrs. Sparrow peeped in and she knew that the slightest noise in the room would make them fly away.

For fully twenty minutes they ate and fluttered about, flying away and then returning. "I think they must be carrying part of it home," thought Jenny to herself. "Next time I visit there I will just notice if they serve

me with any of my molasses candy boy for lunch."

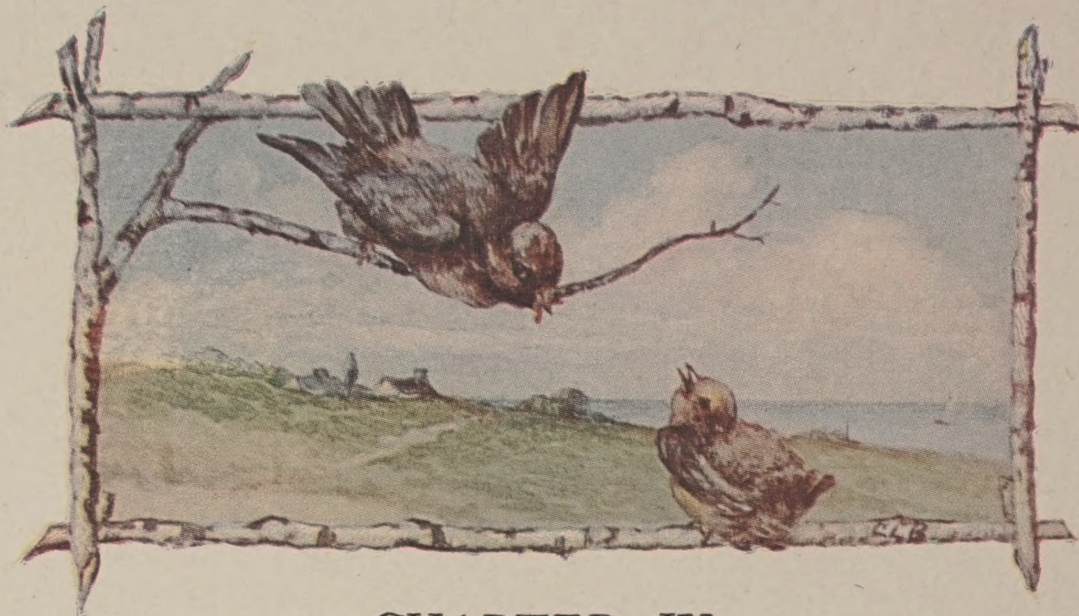
Such fun as the little Sparrows had, no one could describe. Once little Susan got so bold as to fairly step inside the window in her eagerness to get at a bit of the candy that had gone flying through as Mr. Sparrow broke off a huge bite. When she found that she was in the room, the way she hopped out set Jenny to shaking with laughter under the bed clothes, as she pulled them over her head that they might not hear her. At last they flew away, leaving her to wonder what Mrs. Sparrow would give them, if they should have little bird "tummy-aches" after they got home.

Just then, Jenny's mama came into the room and went directly to the window to close it. She spied the poor molasses candy boy,—what there was left of him,—and brought

him in. He certainly looked as though he belonged to a "down-trodden" race, but Jenny told her mama she was sure she had enjoyed it as much as the Sparrow family, and more than if she had eaten it herself.



“As she alighted on the sill she had discovered the molasses candy boy.”



CHAPTER IV

THE CANARY MUSICALE

THERE was great commotion in the bird-house. Even the people passing along in the street below said to each other, "Why, dear me, what is the matter with the birds in the bird-house? They are terribly excited." But how could they know, poor things, that the celebrated Miss Canary, who sang at the Birds' Grand Ball, was coming for a short visit to the Sparrow family?

Mrs. Sparrow had given the house

a very thorough cleaning after the ball, but there was a great deal more to be done, for she was an excellent housekeeper, as well as a charming hostess. And, would you believe it, in the midst of the sweeping and dusting and piano tuning, the washing of windows, the shaking of rugs and the sending out of invitations to their dearest friends to come to meet Miss Canary that afternoon, down came the three Sparrow children with pin-feathers; and you know just what children with pin-feathers are. They want their mother every minute. Mrs. Sparrow had been obliged to send for Dr. Wild Duck and a new nurse, that she might have some time to devote to Miss Canary.

Is it any wonder that little Mrs. Sparrow hardly knew what she was about with all this going on? There were the jews'-harps to be restrung, the telephone was continually ring-

ing and, in the midst of it, a call from a curious neighbor, a Miss Wren — not Miss Jenny Wren, but another Miss Wren — who wanted to find out all about the musicale. All this, with constant chirps and cries from the nursery, so distracted Mrs. Sparrow that she forgot to see that something very necessary was done, — something that annoyed her very much afterwards, and made her quite unhappy. But we will tell you more about this later.

About three o'clock little Miss Canary arrived, somewhat out of breath from flying so high. She was followed by a stout Sparrow with her "box," as they say in England, strapped upon his back. Mrs. Sparrow flew to meet her guest and folded the downy creature in her wings. Miss Canary's feathers were somewhat rumpled after her journey, so she smoothed down her plumage

with great care when her hostess released her, for she was wearing her very best gown.

“Come right into the reception room and have something to eat before you go to your room,” said Mrs. Sparrow, turning to introduce Jenny, who had been asked to come early.

When they had all been served with sweetened rain water and toasted snails, they went to the pretty room which Miss Canary was to have during her stay at the bird-house. This room had beautiful draperies and bed-spread of yellow satin, and all the furniture had been re-covered in yellow, for the Sparrows knew that their guest loved that cheerful color. Miss Canary spoke of it at once, saying, “How kind of you to do this, Mrs. Sparrow!” Mrs. Sparrow was very much pleased and she answered that it had been a great

pleasure to prepare the room for her.

“This looks very much like the piece of satin that Virginia had to make dolls’ clothes of,” thought Jenny Wren as she stood beside their hostess, looking about the pretty room and wondering if they would furnish a room in brown, to go with her brown dress, should they invite her to spend the night. “I’m quite sure this looks like the same piece of satin,” she went on thinking. “I remember Virginia and Constance hunted everywhere for it the day they left their sewing on the lawn to go autoing with Virginia’s father, and they never found it. Of course Mrs. Sparrow wouldn’t take what didn’t belong to her, but the South Wind may have brought it to her—winds do carry things about so—and it certainly is *just* the same shade.”

After a visit to the nursery, where they found all the little Sparrows fast

asleep, the three ladies sat down in Miss Canary's room to have a good chat such as all women enjoy. They were so glad to hear all about her voice, her singing and everything that she liked to tell them, that Miss Canary told them the story of her life.

She was born and lived through her early bird-hood in the Canary Islands. One day an American sea-captain, whose ship was in the harbor, heard her sing and he liked her voice so much that he asked her papa and mama if he might bring her to America with him. They gave their consent and so she had lived in his home in the far South as one of his family until about a year ago, when the sea-captain had died and the home was now broken up; so she had come out, through an open window, to make her way in the world with

her voice, and she was very happy to tell them that she had met with more success than she had ever hoped for.

"You are so good to ask me to spend the night in a real bird-house, Mrs. Sparrow," she said, giving her an affectionate peck, which is the bird way of kissing, "for my life has been rather lonely the past year."

"Well, it certainly won't be lonely here if the little Sparrow children can help it," said Jenny Wren, for at that moment a wild chirping from the nursery had sent Mother Sparrow hopping down stairs.

"I believe I am just a wee bit tired, Jenny Wren. Will you excuse me if I take a little nap before the musicale begins?" said Miss Canary.

Jenny said, "Yes, indeed, that will be just the thing for you to do."

So Miss Canary folded her dainty wings and lay down upon a tiny

yellow couch, tucked a little satin sofa-pillow under her head and was soon asleep. Jenny hopped quietly out of the room and closed the door.

Down stairs she found everything being made ready for the musicale. The piano had been moved in from the music-room, for Mr. Robin, who was to play Miss Canary's accompaniments, had felt that the dining-room was a better place to sing in than the grand hall.

"We want everything to be just perfect," said Mrs. Sparrow, who was hopping about everywhere in great excitement and chattering like a Magpie all the time. "Isn't Miss Canary a dear, and how good she is to come and sing, and isn't her gown the very prettiest shade of yellow you ever saw?"

Just here she spied a "Chippy Sparrow" who was the waitress,

carrying a bowl of rain water into the dining-room; so the little hostess hopped after her to see that she put it in the right place, while Jenny went up to Miss Canary's room to help her get ready for the musicale.

By four o'clock the terrace was full of birds. They arrived so fast and there were so many of them that there was hardly standing room. Indeed, many of the very politest gentlemen birds hung by their feet from the picture moulding to make room for the ladies on the floor. Finally they cleared a space for Miss Canary, who tiptoed modestly, with downcast eyes, to the front. She stood upon the piano while her host introduced her, and then she sang—and such singing Jenny had never heard before. Such trilling, cooing and chirping! No one could hear her and not be delighted with her beautiful voice; and this little audience

was most cordial, for all of them were really very musical themselves. Right in the midst of it all, little Mrs. Sparrow had to leave the room to attend to the young Sparrows, who were making a frightful noise in the nursery above.

Jenny hurried along with her, thinking she might be of some assistance, and found that Tom had fallen out of his crib and lay helpless on his back, chirping loudly for Mama and kicking at his little nurse most violently every time she attempted to help him.

"Oh, such naughty, naughty children," thought Jenny Wren. "If they were mine, I should want them to grow up and fly away."

At last the concert was over and poor, tired little Mrs. Sparrow couldn't help being very glad indeed. The birds began to express their pleasure—in bird language, of course,

—and they all speak so nearly alike that the Sparrow understands the Blackbird, and the Bluebird, the Robin, the Kingfisher, the Bobolink, and so on.

Little Miss Canary, however, having come from so far south, found it very difficult to understand what they were saying. The birds in the Canary Islands use larger words and talk longer at a time than the northern birds like the Robins and Bobolinks, who say things in a very short, quick way and say them a great many times over, as every little northern child knows. But Jenny Wren stood close beside Miss Canary and kindly told her the prettily worded praises of the bird company, who were all saying nice things about her voice and her singing. This pleased Miss Canary very much. She bowed and bowed, offering the tip of her dainty right wing to each

one in turn as she bade him good-bye. She promised to come again, the next summer.

At last they had all flown away and the bird-house soon became quiet, for "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a bird healthy, wealthy and wise" has been the motto of the whole bird family hundreds of years before the great Benjamin Franklin wrote almost the same motto for little boys and girls to learn.

Mrs. Sparrow took Miss Canary to her room, and then visited the nursery to tuck in each little Sparrow for the night. The tears came to her eyes as she bent over little Tom, who had fallen out of his crib that afternoon. Although he was now fast asleep, he was still sobbing.

Mrs. Sparrow had given little Jenny Wren a very cordial invitation to stay over night, so she was there in the morning when Miss Canary had bid-

den them good-bye and started on her journey. She was about to go herself when she heard Mrs. Sparrow saying, "Oh, dear! Oh, dear!! Oh, dear!!! What shall I do? Do come here and see what has happened!"

Jenny hopped as fast as she could into the room where Miss Canary had slept and found that, to Mrs. Sparrow's dismay, in the hurry of the day before, the maids had forgotten to put water in Miss Canary's room, or sheets on the bed; and the poor dear had been obliged to lie on the dried alder leaves all night, with nothing between them and her beautiful gown.

"You certainly would never have known it, would you, Jenny Wren? How she could contrive to come down this morning with unruffled plumage is more than I know. I am afraid she will never come here again!"

“Oh, dear! Oh, dear!” said Jenny, in her turn; and “Oh, dear! Oh, dear,” repeated little Mrs. Sparrow, both fairly crying as they sat down on the nest in the nursery. They both felt very blue indeed, but presently Jenny had a bright thought.

“Why don’t you write her a note and explain all about it?” she said.

“Why, so I can, I’ll do it right away.” So Mrs. Sparrow sat down at a little desk in her room, wrote a note on a blade of grass, with a quill pen, and sent a “Chippy Sparrow” off with it “a-flying.”

Mrs. Sparrow and Jenny Wren hopped down stairs together and out through the arched door. Jenny thanked her hostess for the pleasant time she had had, and promised to come again soon.

“Dear me,” she thought to herself, hesitating for a moment as she glanced downward, “I have never stayed away

from home so long as this before. What will Mama think?"

This time she didn't seem to be in the least afraid. She closed her eyes, spread out her wings and flew straight into . . . her little bed.

"Why, why, I've had another Bird-House Dream," she said, when she was fairly awake; and later she told her most intimate friends, Gracie and Constance and Harriet, all about her last visit to the bird-house. She was so much better now that they had come, with her cousin Caroline, to see her and all four of the little girls ran to the nursery window to look out at the bird-house and all four wished they might dream about going inside of it, just as Jenny had dreamed of doing.

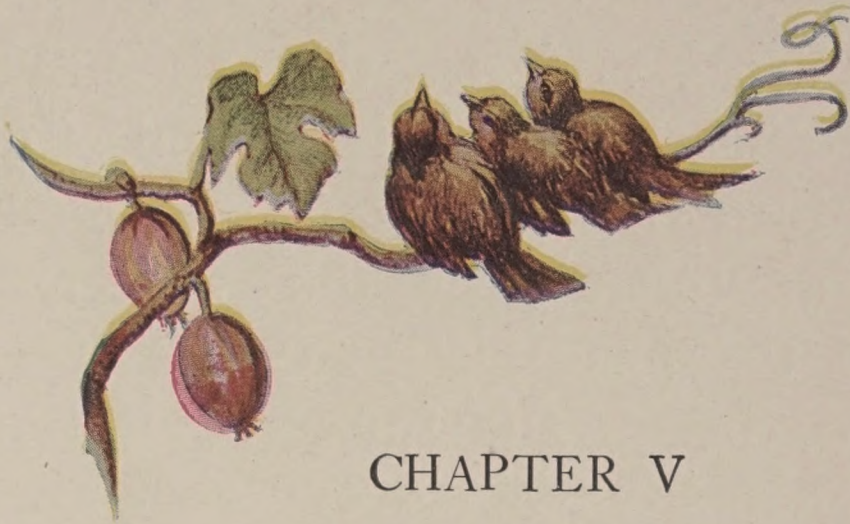
"Just shut your eyes tight and think about it hard just before you go to sleep," was the little girl's

advice to her friends, and they all said they would try, and would tell each other the very next day what they had dreamed.





“He looked back over his shoulder and said ‘Quack,’ ‘Quack,’ again.”



CHAPTER V

THE LITTLE BIRDS' COMING OUT PARTY

THERE was a great flutter of poplar leaves one day, so much so that the people noticed it and said, "Just see how that tree is shedding its leaves." Clouds of the little yellow and green things were floating about in the air.

"Oh, I know," said Jenny, as one flew in at her window. "Those are the invitations for the little Sparrows' coming out party."

Little Mrs. Sparrow had felt for some time that her children were now large enough to be better known in

bird society, and as the time was drawing near when they and their special bird friends would be going to the Southland for the winter, if she **was** to give this party for Tom, Ben and Susan, she must do it now.

The poplar tree grew very near the bird-house and little Mrs. Sparrow had asked Mrs. Poplar if she might use her leaves for invitations.

“Oh, take as many as you like. You are quite welcome,” said Mrs. Poplar. “I shall be going into winter quarters very early myself, this year. You may have all you need.”

Whether she realized that it would take so many, or not, we do not know; but Mrs. Sparrow's family were very much liked and had a great many friends, so that ever so many invitations were needed to reach them all. The gentle South Wind had graciously offered to distribute them. He really had had no idea

that it would take so many leaves, or so much time, but it had kept him busy nearly all day; and by sundown Mrs. Poplar stood shivering a little, as the wind had come round into the east.

The Sparrow family had flown about in all directions to find the right place for their party and had finally decided that the triangle in front of the Pearl Street School was in every way the best spot. It was not too far for the smaller birds. Then there were tall trees for their flying bird games and, above all, there was a large pond in the center of the triangle which the rain had made. It seemed like a very large pond to the Sparrow family, but it really was what Jenny called a fair-sized mud puddle. The fact that it was near the schoolhouse and that the boys and girls might see them from the windows, made

it all the more desirable — for birds really love children, even if they don't show it.

Mrs. Sparrow had invited all of the very young birds of Tom, Ben and Susan's age, and had set the hour from two to three in the afternoon, for she knew very well that little birds must be home in season to go to bed early. Their parents were invited to come with them, of course.

It was a lovely day in early fall. The sun shone down through the trees, making spots of sunshine on the grass below. The pond had not dried up at all, except on the very edge, where the shiny mud was soft and cool to the little birds' feet as they patted happily about in it. Birds are very much like boys and girls, you see, for everybody knows that all children love to "go barefooted" in a mud-puddle.

Of course Jenny Wren was one of the first at the party. Father and Mother Sparrow and the three little Sparrows were there very early. Most birds are prompt, and an invitation for two o'clock to them does not mean half-past two.

It is hard to tell what they did not do to amuse themselves. They chased each other up into trees and down again. They played a game in which they hopped from one bright spot of sunshine to another, no two birds being allowed on the same spot at the same time. They tried to see which could pull up the most blades of grass, and a large blue-bottle fly was the prize.

But the principal amusement was bathing. They bathed and bathed, flew up into the trees, shook themselves, and then went in again. Jenny thought if these bird mothers had been real mothers they would have

been dreadfully frightened to have their children go into the water so many times in one day. But the bird mothers didn't seem to mind at all. In fact, they went in themselves as many times as their little folks did.

It seemed to Jenny Wren that she had never had so much fun in all her life. She went wading in the pond with the other birds. While she was taking a dip, whom should she see but two of her little girl friends, Virginia and Gracie, who had been sent on an errand for the teacher and who were on their way back to the schoolhouse. They had stopped to watch the bird party. They didn't stand very near, and the birds didn't seem to mind them at all. The little girls laughed and laughed as they watched them play pranks on each other, exactly as boys and girls do at their parties.

All of a sudden something hap-

pened which might have been a tragedy — and a tragedy is a very dreadful thing indeed. A bird much larger than the parents of any of the young birds came walking out of a doorway across the street and up to the pond. He had a broad bill and waddled as he walked. He came up to the party and said something in the queerest language they had ever heard. To the little girls it sounded like “Quack,” “Quack.” To the little birds it sounded very loud and harsh. They were much frightened and started to fly away, when Mrs. Sparrow assured them that this was only Dr. Duck, their family physician. After a minute or two, this strange bird waddled into the pond, which was quite deep. Each little bird stood on tiptoe on the shore, all very much frightened, and fairly gasping with horror to see him go on and on. Finally he stopped wad-

ing and they could see that he was swimming. He looked back over his shoulder and said, "Quack," "Quack," again.

Then it dawned upon each Mr. Bird that he was being dared to do the same thing. Now, they had none of them been taught to swim. Indeed, it is a very rare thing for land-birds to swim. Bathing on the edge of a pond was one thing, and swimming across it was another. By this time the strange bird had reached shallow water again, had shaken his stubby tail and had waddled off, with another "Quack," "Quack," over his shoulder, which seemed to say, "You don't dare," "You don't dare."

Then the gentlemen birds and their sons held a hurried talk at the head of the pond. The ladies felt that this was no time for them to speak. The Mr. Birds agreed that the dare

could not be ignored and that for the honor of the bird kingdom, and especially of the Sparrow family who were entertaining them, some one ought to swim across the pond. Before they could come to any conclusion, however, Mr. E. Sparrow stepped forward like a hero. He threw himself, unmindful of the cries of his wife and three little daughters, into the waters of the pond. He plunged in so deeply that he sank at once, and for a moment was stuck fast in the mud at the bottom. Kicking himself loose, however, he struck out manfully with his wings, but flying and swimming are very different. The other little birds knew then what was happening. He was in the middle of the pond and struggling for his life. His friends were all flying about in wild excitement, trying to tell him what to do, when they didn't know themselves. His wife

had fainted and the daughters were rushing back and forth from the pond, where their father was drowning, to the bank, where their mother was fainting.

Just here one of the two little girls who had been watching the birds' party saw that Mr. E. Sparrow was in danger of drowning. Without a moment's hesitation she waded into the mud-puddle, without stopping to take off her shoes, and brought the poor, gasping little bird to shore. She laid him tenderly on one of the warm, sunshiny spots on the bank and then looked down, in dismay, at her wet shoes and stockings. The little girls went on to the schoolhouse, where the teacher, not quite understanding it, reproved them both for not coming directly back when sent on an errand, and especially Virginia for stopping to wade in a mud-puddle with her shoes

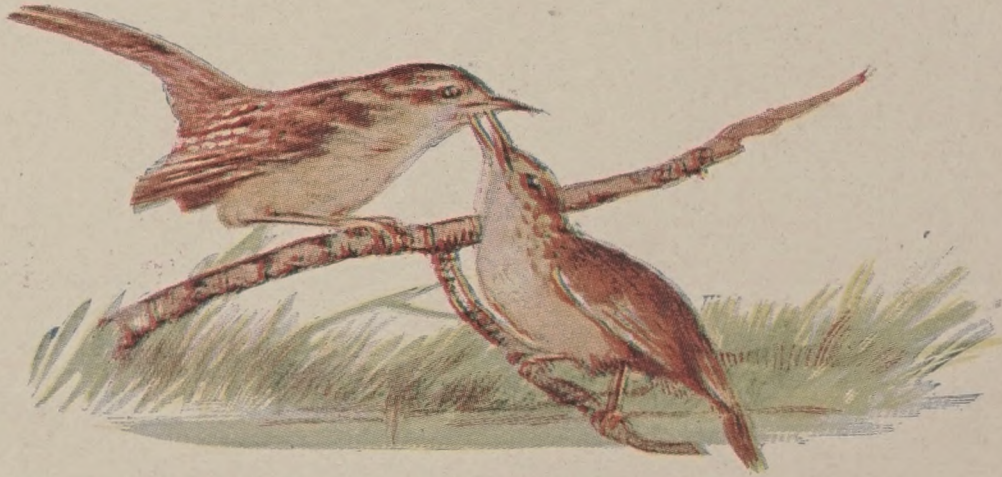
and stockings on. The girls told her all about it and, when she understood it, she said she would excuse them and that she was glad Virginia had saved poor little Mr. E. Sparrow's life.

He had soon revived, having been rolled about on the grass and led about by the wings until he declared he felt as well as ever. It was then time for refreshments. They were to be served at the Martins' garbage pail, not far away. Father Sparrow gave the signal and in a moment a great flock of them were flying past Dr. Palmer's barn and Mr. Coolidge's house. There was a large variety of eatables, for the Martins had had a party the night before, and Mrs. Sparrow's guests hovered about the dainties with little chirps of content and, it must be said, with better manners than usual, for they offered each other bits of cake and

the outside of chicken sandwiches, or said, "Have you found any of those delicious macaroons?" "This block sugar is unusually fine, Mrs. Sparrow," "Do have a bit of this candied orange peel," and so on. Perhaps it was because they were at a party, for birds are apt to be rather selfish as a rule, when it comes to eating, and each looks out for himself.

At three o'clock to the minute, Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow and the three little Sparrows stood on the stump of a tree near the bird-house and said good-bye to their guests. All the young birds were told by their mothers to touch wings with the Sparrow family and say that they had had a very nice time. The father and mother birds—even poor little Mr. E. Sparrow—did the same, and added that they had enjoyed it more than any party they had ever attended.

When the last guest had flown away, Mrs. Sparrow chirped "Up" to Ben and Tom and Susan Sparrow, and they all disappeared for the night into the white bird-house.





“She came to the window in her white nightie just in time to see the whole flock rise into the air and fly away due South.”



CHAPTER VI

THE SPARROW FAMILY GOES SOUTH FOR THE WINTER

“IT is better to go while the weather is pleasant,” said Mother Sparrow.

“It will be less trouble to get food on the way if we don’t wait too long,” said thrifty Father Sparrow.

“But we’re having such a good time here, where we have so many children-birds to play with,” said Ben and Tom and Susan Sparrow, who had never been South in their lives. “We’re used to things here and we should miss our friends and Jenny and Constance and Gracie and Dr. Baldwin’s apple tree.”

“What should we do without the Merriams’ garbage pail?” wailed the smallest of the three little Sparrows, who had the largest appetite of all.

“My dears,” said their father, in a very deep chirp, when the “Chippy” who waited upon them had left the dining room, “you will have to take Father’s and Mother’s advice in this matter. We stayed North too long one year and were very sorry. We nearly froze to death. This house has no means of heating, the fireflies will not give us any more light, and servants are so scarce in winter that you and your mother would have to take all the care of the bird-house yourselves.”

This was a new light upon the subject and the little Sparrows stopped talking about staying North for the Winter. They went quietly about, helping their mother get ready to leave the house in perfect order.

The little cribs were folded up, Mrs. Sparrow dropping a tear into each, and set against the nursery wall. The piano was closed and covered carefully with leaves, for the older birds knew that the snow would make its way into their lovely home while they were gone and that they must take every precaution.

Every time they went out for an airing, the Sparrow family flew to say good-bye to some one or some place that they loved. Once they went to the edge of Dr. Palmer's roof which looked down upon the Merriams' piazza, where the three little girls, Jenny and Constance and Gracie, had played day after day. They talked it all over as they hopped about. How dear the children had been to them all summer! How many times they had seen them spread bread-crumbs and dainties on the tree stump near the garbage pail

which was in plain sight of the bird-house! How good Jenny had been to give them all they wanted of her Molasses Candy Boy; and they said again and again, that if it hadn't been for Virginia's bravery, and for her not caring if she did get her shoes and stockings wet, poor Mr. E. Sparrow would be in his grave.

One morning, bright and early, they flew over to Constance's window and said "Good-bye" to her from the window sill. She was so sleepy that she only opened one eye and shut it again, so she never knew that it was a farewell from her beloved family of Sparrows that had wakened her. Another morning they went to Gracie's room in the same way. She heard them and ran to the window; but they weren't used to seeing her in white, so they thought it was a stranger and all flew away before she could speak.

At last the morning for their going South came. Each little Sparrow had been taught how to oil his plumage to make his coat rain-proof. Mother Sparrow had carefully packed a box for each one to carry under his wing. Into them she had put bits of fruit-cake and dried fruits — we hardly need state where she had found these dainties. She had added a lump of block sugar with a brown stain on one end which looked like coffee. Block sugar, you know, is excellent for sore throat and she felt that they might have some trouble of that nature before they reached the South.

Many families were to go at the same time. They were all to meet on the terrace of the bird-house. By five o'clock a great many birds were there, all talking excitedly and making such a noise that sleepy people, who didn't understand them, turned crossly in their beds and wished "those

sparrows would stop their racket."

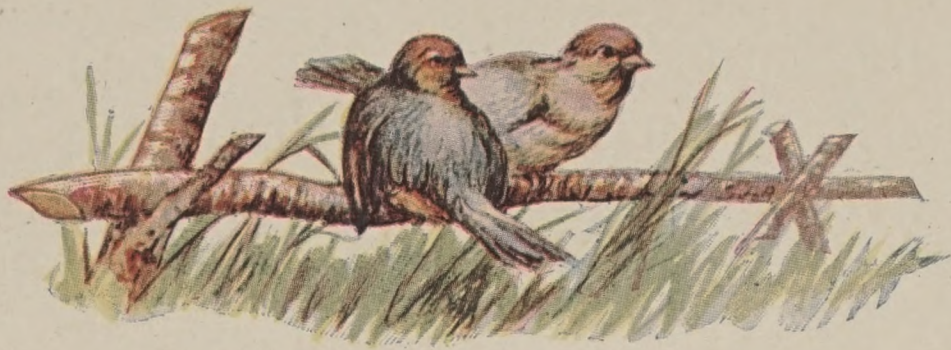
Father Sparrow had been elected leader for the party. He was known to be very clear-headed and to have a good bump of location. He carried, beside his box of provisions under one wing, a small but complete map of the route under the other, both tied on with strong strings. It was a gay scene. All the birds were constantly taking little short flights from the terrace to the near-by trees to try their wings. Mr. Cat-bird, who had come to see them off, began to cry like a kitten from down in the grass and when they found what a joke he had played upon them, they all flew upon him and pretended to peck him for a punishment. The Sparrow family kept going back to their dear bird-house to say "good-bye" once more and Mrs. Sparrow's wings drooped sadly when Father Sparrow said they

really must start. He stood with Mother Sparrow and the three little Sparrows on the edge of the terrace, the others behind them, all ready to fly.

“Just one song now for Jenny,” said Father Sparrow; and they all burst forth with great heartiness, for Jenny was a favorite with the birds, as we have seen.

Their music awakened the little girl from sleep and she came to the window in her white nightie, just in time to see the whole flock rise into the air and fly away due South.





CHAPTER VII

JENNY'S FLY-AWAY CANARY

“**W**HY, that can't be thunder!” exclaimed the lady who was calling upon Jenny's mother.

“Oh, no,” said she, “that's Robert playing with the bird.”

“Playing with the bird and making such a noise!” said the surprised lady. “What kind of a bird can it be not to be frightened to death?”

“A canary,” said Jenny's mother. “Come upstairs with me and I'll show you.”

So the two ladies went up to the nursery. There the two ladies found the dear grandmother, who sat calmly sewing, and Robbie, who was a golden-

haired, curly-headed, blue-eyed baby of two. He was pushing about on the bare floor a window seat on castors, with a box-plaited petticoat. He had thrown its top cushion into a corner of the bay-window. In all directions went the big box, the baby flushed and excited, shouting with glee. On the top of the box rode a little canary-bird — a dainty, slender little fellow, with a pale yellow coat of feathers and a voice like a silver flute. He broke into song as the ladies stood in the doorway, not at all frightened by the fact that just then the box ran into a chair with a famous “whack.”

Robert, spying his mother, deserted his play and his playmate and ran to her. The ladies seated themselves for a chat with Grandma — Robbie perched contentedly in his mother's lap.

The little bird had turned sharp,

bright eyes upon the stranger. Then he had flown to the roof of his cage which hung in a sunny window, and so he was forgotten for the moment. Suddenly, with a whirr of the tiny wings, he flew down to Grandma's shoulder. There he ran about, first on one shoulder, then on the other, under her chin and part way down her back, until the good lady was positively annoyed—or would have been if she had not seen how it amused the visitor.

Just here Master Dixie left Grandma's shoulder and alighted upon the forefinger of her right hand. There he rode back and forth as she sewed, and no amount of gentle shaking would make his clinging claws let go. He seemed to think it a sort of fighting game and clung fast to her finger with spread wings, little bill wide open, and eyes like angry, black beads.

Tiring of his rather rough ride, he next took a stand upon Grandma's white head. Selecting a hair daintily with his bill, he braced himself and pulled with all his might. Grandma's patience was exhausted.

"Now, Dixie-bird, that's a little too much! I'm going to stitch on the sewing-machine and you'll have to go into your cage." So, after giving him a seed from her lips, she took him on her finger to the door of the gilded cage. He hopped in very willingly and the door was closed.

Grandma sat down to the machine. She began to sew, and went quite a long way before she discovered that she hadn't stitched a stitch. "It's that Dixie's work again," she said to the lady. "I can't keep the thread in the machine needle when he is out of his cage. He'll pull it out every time."

"I see you don't keep the nursery door shut. Doesn't he ever fly into the other part of the house?" asked Mrs. Eldridge.

"Very seldom," said Jenny's mother, "and then we can find him easily, for he always answers when we call. Dixie," she said, her voice only a very little louder than before.

"Cheep!" answered Dixie cheerfully, from the vicinity of the seed-cup in his cage. Birds always have an appetite all the time.

"You never feel afraid that he'll fly out of a window?" asked the visitor, who couldn't seem to get used to a bird's being so exactly one of the family.

"Oh, no indeed!" said Jenny's mother, as they said good-bye to Grandma and Robert and went downstairs to finish the call that Robert's "thunder" had interrupted.

Both the lady and Jenny's mother

thought of their conversation a few days later when the whole family was thrown into grief and dismay. Dixie had flown out of a window and had been gone all night. Jenny felt so badly that her mother had said that she might stay home from school that forenoon, hoping that by afternoon she should have had her cry out and her mind could be diverted from her lost bird. Poor child! each time she looked at the empty cage she burst into tears, and even when the cook allowed her to help with the gingersnaps — which was a special favor — she could not keep her mind off her bird. Again and again she wondered if he had been cold and hungry all night, and once a great tear splashed down upon the little cakes she was lifting from the pan with a knife.

Suddenly Mother called out to her, "Jenny, I do believe I hear Dixie

singing over in the trees near the river. ”

Jenny deserted the cook and the gingersnaps in a flash and was out on the piazza, listening. There were many birds in the trees near the river, but it did seem as if one song was different from all the others.

“Dixie, Dixie!” cried the little girl, although she was too far away for him to hear her.

“Take the cage with you,” called Mother, who was as much excited as her daughter.

So with the bright cage in her hand she ran across the fields between their house and the river.

“Dixie, Dixie!” she called, unceasingly. She paused a moment to listen. “Dixie!” she called again. Did she? — yes, she did hear an answering “Cheep!” in the same cheerful tone that Dixie always had. Now she drew near enough to see

into the tops of the trees. The birds that were flying about them were not bright in color, nor did they answer to her call.

“Dixie!”

“Cheep!” came from farther up the stream.

“Oh, Dixie, you’re going away from me!” half sobbed the little girl as she ran on in the direction of the bird-voice she knew. He led her from tree to tree, making her heart-sick from excitement and anxiety in a way Dixie would never have done if he could have known what he was doing. At last she saw a darting gleam of yellow in a tall tree. She held high the cage which had been his home for so long, and her childish voice rose above the murmur of the river among the stones along the bank.

“Cheep, Cheep!” went on the gay bird-voice.

“Oh, Dixie, do come home!” pleaded the child. “We all love you so, and we want you so.”

As if this was more of an appeal than he could withstand, Dixie, with a happy little burst of song, flew down to her, leaving behind him his freedom, the trees, the society of birds, and alighted on the roof of his own cage. Jenny held her breath, not daring to speak. Round and round the cage he went, clinging to the wires, with little, low, happy chirps, until he found the open door and whisked in, going directly to the seed-cup. Jenny closed the door quickly and walked away home as if on air.

“I have him, Mama, I have him! Here’s Dixie, Robert!” she called.

The whole family gathered on the side veranda to see her come home with her bird and all were so happy about it. The cook brought some

fresh gingersnaps for every one, including Dixie, who ate his crumb with a fine relish, hopping gaily from one perch to the other, and chirping joyously as if to say, "It really pays to run away once in awhile, to find out how much people think of you."

OCT 19 1910

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00025604453

